

SOLYMAN AND FATIMA;

OR,

THE SCEPTIC CONVINCED.

AN

EASTERN TALE.

BY T. WRIGHT.

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SOLYMAN AND LATIMA

THE SCENIC CONVICTION

BY T. W. RILEY

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SOLYMAN

FATIMA

CHAPTER XL

THE decline of day reminded the son of Zadah of the necessity of relinquishing the pleasing conversation of the Bramin, and he reluctantly bade farewell to the solitude where peace seemed to have fixed her calm abode. The road to his paternal dwelling lay by

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and he exclaimed—"Suajah was deceitful, yet, had not the indigent condition of Solyman favoured the iniquity of his base designs, the power of executing his sordid purpose had been denied. Riches and power are the only barriers against the insolence of vice:—Why was not the son of Zadah born to affluence and dignity, rather than the heir of a few sheep and an ignoble cottage? then should his hand have disseminated benefits, and while secure himself from the power of injustice, his employ had been to avert the evils of ambition and avarice, and to assert the natural rights of mankind.

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At the instant of uttering this soliloquy, he was sitting on the acclivity of a mountain which overlooked the city of Delhi; the resplendency of the newly risen sun, gave cheerfulness and lustre to every object. Solyman beheld something lie at his feet which emulated the brightness of the celestial luminary; he took it from the ground, and found it a diamond of prodigious magnitude.—

“Some beneficent Genii (cried he with transport) has regarded the secret breathings of my soul—with gratitude I embrace the unexpected boon—and thou resplendent gem, which chance has loosened from thy secret bed to enrich a hapless wanderer,

derer, thou shalt henceforth place him on a level with the wealthy ones of the earth, and procure him delights which irradiate the encircled brow of majesty."

In a transport of bliss he hastened to dispose of his shining treasure, and now beheld himself in possession of a fund sufficient to the acquisition of every enjoyment his sanguine imagination could present. Intent on procuring the satisfactions now within his power, he no longer thought of revisiting the plains of Cassimere; but silenced the suggestions of filial tenderness by reflecting, that Zadah, when acquainted with the good fortune
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of his son, would be far from requiring him to quit a condition in which the means both of happiness and virtue must be enlarged. His first care therefore was to determine on that mode of life which should appear most conducive to the enjoyment of his wealth; to this end he procured a magnificent mansion, decorated with splendor and elegance. His camels were numerous; his couriers, procured from the boundless wilds of Arabia, were fleet as the winds which sweep the bosom of the earth :—The luxury of his table, the exquisiteness of his perfumes, and number of his domestics, described the fortunate possessor of abundance.

CHAPTER XII.

THE avenues of delight now opened to the son of Zadah on every side, and with impatience he explored the secret recesses of untried felicity; but the involuntary sigh which oft insensibly obtruded on his most joyous hours witnessed the vain research, and frequently the assurance of external circumstances, was denied by dissatisfied

satisfied emotions apparent in the clouded countenance.

Delhi, extensive, populous, and abounding with people from every quarter of the globe, was yet a desert to him whose early impressions had taught him to value the tender connections of social life. The crowded city contained none whom the ties of nature or long established friendship interested in his happiness. The civilities he received, were more the homage paid to his wealth than the tribute of personal affection; while the force of that reflection forbade the satisfactions of unreserved confidence. The sordid and the base contemplated his splendor with envy and

and malevolence ; his merit, viewed through the medium of calumny was diminished, and his frailties, though such as are incident to humanity, exaggerated by the tongue of malice. The sensibility of Solyman was injured by those insidious attacks, for the acuteness of his feelings bore a nice proportion to the innate rectitude of his heart ; yet as liberal minds aspire above the narrow bounds of local prejudice, and embrace the whole of society as citizens of the world at large, there were doubtless, among the inhabitants of Delhi, those with whom he might have formed the amiable union of friendship, on the basis of experienced truth

truth and virtue; but the knowledge he had acquired of mankind repelled the kindly instinct, and forced him to suspect a Suajah in all who adopted the language of esteem: thus with the most refined perceptions of the pleasure arising from social intercourse, he supported a selfish and solitary existence amidst the thronged resort of social beings.

But if natural resentments subsisting in the mind of Solyman excluded the satisfactions of friendship, he found himself at liberty to indulge the emotions of a beneficent temper by the liberal means which now were in his possession. He delighted

delighted to explore the recesses of the unhappy—to pour balm on the wounds of affliction, and lighten the burdens of indigence; but though his benevolence was sometimes repaid by the felicity of beholding comfort restored to the mansions of distress, he more frequently had the mortification to be convinced, that his charity had been bestowed on imposture, or returned with ingratitude; nor was it unusual for those whom his bounty had one day relieved, to attack him the next with the rancour of detraction, or the efforts of ill-will. His disposition, placid as the bosom of the silver rill, aimed at peace with all mankind; yet the concessions

cessions he was often compelled to make for the effecting so invaluable a good, were misinterpreted as the result of pusillanimity, and tended to accelerate a repetition of injury; he perceived the necessity of becoming vindictive in order to be secure, and litigious from pure regard to unanimity. His treatment of his slaves and domestics was directed by the gentle feelings of humanity—he regarded them as unfortunate brethren; compassion softened the rigor of servitude, and all his commands were uttered in the mild language of request—but born to the condition of slavery, and accustomed from former masters to brutal and tyrannic treatment,

treatment, their ideas approached scarcely the standard of rationality: on minds servile as their condition, the lenity of Solyman had no other effect than to introduce indolence and disorder in his household. Hence his domestic scenes were destitute of tranquility, and beneath his own roof, where a mind like his attuned, would primarily seek its satisfactions, all was anarchy or dull vacuity, and he began at length to conclude, that the wisdom of Providence has proportioned the several stations of mankind to the measure of intellectual capacity, and that the happiness of individuals is properly found in that walk of life which a power infinitely

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wise

wife hath allotted. "What fond fantastic vision (said he) hath danced before my eyes?—I have pursued the pleasing phantom, but have found it not."

Amidst the secret dissatisfactions which compelled Zadah's mistaken son to own that happiness was not inherent in the golden treasures that amuse the fordid desires of mortals, his bosom aspired to the ineffable satisfactions of mutual love; but here an insurmountable bar was fixed. Fatima still was present to his soul—resentment told him that he loved her not, yet was he incapable of feeling for another the same exalted sentiment which had
once

once animated his breast. To divert his melancholy he purchased a beautiful Circassian slave, the graces of whose form might rival those of the lovely Fatima; yet, Solyman found, that the tender sympathy of love depends not on symmetry of features, or elegance of form—he was convinced, that the passion alone, devoid of sentiment, is inadequate to the noble properties of a human soul, and is to that sublime affection, what the shadow is to an object. Thus every satisfaction was imperfect, and Solyman the affluent, the magnificent, still imagined that he saw in every countenance, the traces of that happiness which could not be the inmate of his own breast.

CHAPTER XIII.

IT was now that memory presented to the discontented Solyman, the early days of his youth; when, undisturbed by the vanity of human wishes, he embraced pleasure as arrayed in her purest robe. She arose to greet his view amidst a variety of simple incidents: fancy retraced the tranquil scenes where he had passed the first hours of life; the groves, the meads, and

flowery vales, wherein a taste as yet unvitiated, found beauty and delight in all. “ Days of bliss, (he exclaimed) moments of peace and unadulterate joy, I shall never more possess ye!——yet, fresh remains the verdure of your forest scenes, and soft as ever flows the crystal rill; Solyman alone is changed; ye have no charms for him who views you not through the medium of juvenile simplicity. Surely the path which leads to the true enjoyment of life, is easy and direct; not found in the extravagance of fancy, but attainable only by those who have learned to moderate the vivacity of a sanguine imagination,

imagination, and find content in the simple walk of relative and social duty."

To divert the weight of mental lassitude, he took a solitary walk in the environs of Delhi; the noise of the crowded city was no longer heard—the busy multitude was withdrawn from his sight—he sat down on a grassy bank, listening to the dashing of an adjacent cascade—on a sudden his ear was delighted with the silver sound of a lute, and a voice attuned to melody itself, chaunted the following words:

ODE TO PATIENCE.

Gentle Patience, virgin mild,
Wisdom's eldest, fairest child,
Smile on my bosom, and infuse
Peace more sweet than evening dews ;
Or than, springs enlivening showers,
Distilling soft on opening flowers ;
Or fairest zephirs of the year,
That all Arabia's incense bear ;
Sweet are these, yet sweeter still,
The joys thy placid smiles instil :
Then shed on me thy gentle ray,
And chase the clouds of grief away ;
Be thou my guest, as oft I know
Thou dwell'st in humble cottage low,
With indigence in homely dress,
And dost the scanty morsel bless.
Amidst the desert too I ween,
With Hermits thou art often seen ;
Who the midnight hours pass
In sweet repose on dewy grass ;
Whose diet herbs and roots compose,
Whose drink the crystal rill that flows ;

Content

Content with all her joys are thine,
That best of stores, that wealth divine ;
Whose mirror helps the mental sight,
To view life's picture with delight,
And guides the soul oppress'd with woe,
To joys which from her presence flow.
To independence truly great,
To bliss beyond the power of fate,
And liberty, that never springs
From the precarious smile of kings ;
And wealth immense, that scorns to owe
Its being to the mine below !
Oh be these gifts sweet Patience mine,
And youthful hopes I here resign ;
'Tho' far from scenes which once cou'd please,
From love's fond smile and rural ease :
I'll bear my fate, if blest'd with thee,
And kiss the chains of Slavery.

The invisible musician here ceased the warbling strain, yet still it vibrated on the ear of Solyman ; the voice was grateful to his soul—it

resembled that to which he had so often listened with rapture—it recalled to his fond remembrance the melodious accents of Fatima. Oppressed by indescribable emotions, he rose from his seat, his impatient eye eagerly roved on every side, anxious to discover from whence the sound proceeded; he distinguished nothing but the tall cedars which waved in a spacious garden, the walls of which precluded every effort of the enquiring eye; yet, from thence, he concluded, had proceeded that voice which powerfully engaged every feeling—after remaining some minutes as if fixed by enchantment to the spot, yet unable to determine on a method of
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of ascertaining those crude conjectures which floated in his disturbed imagination, at length he beheld a door open which gave admission to the garden—his frame trembled, the blood by rapid alternation now rushed to, and now retreated from his cheek :—a slave appeared.

“ Where (cried Solyman with a distracted air) is that Lady whose voice but now gave charms to melody? grant me admission to her presence—on my knees I ask it, or if compassion for an unfortunate man influence thee not, let riches bribe thee to pity : ask what thou wilt and it shall be thine.”

The slave heard the singular address with astonishment; at first he supposed it the language of insanity, but perceiving in the air and countenance of Solyman that he was deeply interested in the enquiry, he replied, "Thou hast deceived thyself, oh stranger, in the conjecture thou hast formed; the voice is not that of a female, nor is any woman at this time in the garden. It proceeded from a young slave who often employs his leisure hours in singing to his lute, which he touches with admirable skill, as thine ear has now witnessed."

Solyman made no reply; the sting of disappointment entered deep

deep into his bosom; the groan he uttered was expressive of his feelings. After a painful pause, he returned thanks to the slave for the attention he had bestowed on his anxiety, and wrapping his face in his mantle, hastened to his dwelling.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER. XVI.

OF the several methods which Solyman had adopted for the gratification of his native liberality, there was one in which he much delighted, namely, in visiting those dreary receptacles of misery, where torn from every tender connection, dead to society, and secluded from the common benefits of light and air, insolvent industry, no less than criminal profusion, is condemned to waste the moments of
a pain-

a painful life. In one of those melancholy recesses, he beheld a wretch pale, emaciated, reclining on a heap of straw in a corner of the dark apartment, where the faint glimmerings of light issuing from the narrow apertures of a grated window, served but to render darkness visible. Solyman was about to enquire the nature of his misfortunes, when the miserable object in a hollow voice called on him by name; but who can paint the astonishment of Solyman, when in him he recognized the features of the treacherous Suajah. Without giving him time to recover from his surprize, the wretch exclaimed, "Thou recollectest

lectest me then—the betrayer of thy liberty is known to thee: Yes, I repeat, the betrayer of thy liberty; for since to pardon such an action is not in human nature, I will expatiate on the glorious deed. Suajah betrayed thee Solyman—he sold thee to slavery.”

Solyman, with a look of celestial pity, that expressed those benign sensations with which beings of a superior order contemplate the depravity of the children of the dust, drew towards him:—“ Yes, (cried he) the son of Zadah can pity even thee; the wrong thou didst me is already avenged in the misery I see thee now sustaining.”

“ But

“ But thy pity (resumed the miserable) is yet a more deep revenge to the bosom of Suajah, nor shall thy pride be gratified by demonstrating what I am far from asking. I will force thee to execration—I will compel thee to pursue me with imprecation even to the gates of death. Know, oh thou credulous one! that though thy genius has delivered thee from slavery, yet the triumph of thy enemy is complete. Fatima, thy loved Fatima is a slave, by the hand of him who robbed thee of liberty.”

Solyman, whose exalted soul had melted into forgiveness of his own injuries, when he beheld the in-

fictor of them struggling with misery and death, was yet unable to preserve the same sensation towards the enemy of Fatima; he laid his hand on his sabre—he was about to plunge it into the malevolent breast of Suajah, but the powers of virtue restrained his arm, and suppressed his just revenge.

“Tell me (cried he) thou minister of darkness, tell me where thou hast disposed of Fatima. If thou wouldst avert the terrors of eternal justice, direct me in the means of her recovery.”

“That (replied he) were an attonement which it is impossible
for

for me to make, did even a pusillanimous compunction pervade this breast, which is superior to fear. I am beyond the reach of thy revenge, and despise thy superstitious menace."

"Art thou then an Atheist," said Solyman?

"I am, (resumed the wretch with an aspect of horror) and I hate all mankind; therefore, when thy simplicity had acquainted me of thy interest in Fatima, I conceived the noble plan of frustrating for ever your mutual happiness, by decoying thee also into slavery, and gratifying at once the love of gold,

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and the pleasure my soul is susceptible of in ministering to human misery."

"Heaven is just, (exclaimed Solyman with a piercing groan) yet say, was Fatima indeed inconstant, as thy insinuations once implied."

"If (answered he) the truth would tend to alleviate thy grief, I would still conceal it; but to sting thy heart more deep, know that Fatima was full of love and truth.—Thy name dwelt on her tongue; thy virtues were the theme of all her discourse. I decoyed her far from thy redress, for her beauty stimulated my avarice, and her price

price was the rich reward of my policy:—Yet, even in the moment when she became a slave, the name of Solyman dwelt on her trembling lip.—Hear this thou credulous one, and curse thine existence!”

At that instant an invisible hand was exerted to punish such impiety and guilt.—The features of Suajah were distorted by dreadful convulsions; his eyes rolled with infernal horror, and his frame shook as in the last pangs of dissolution. Catching hold of the hands of those who stood near, he cried in an inexpressible agony—“Save me! shelter me from the vengeance of the Deity, whose existence till now I

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acknowledged not.—The reality of his being is now even now impressed with horrors unutterable on my soul;—the terrors of his presence are within me:—Oh that he would frown me into my original nothing! If indeed there be a Deity, whose existence now I feel through all my powers, better for Suajah to have never been.”

Here his agony became more excruciating; the horrors of infernal darkness kindled more visibly in his distorted countenance. —“Hide me, oh earth! (exclaimed he) hide me from his terrific presence:—Ye lightnings consume me—thunders strike me to non-entity.”—

These were the last words of the wile Suajah;—that moment the hand of death sealed his lips in silence, and the reluctant soul descended to the realms of darkness for ever.

Solyman turned from the dreadful scene, and, buried in thought, retired to his habitation.

CHAPTER XV.

IF vain and unsatisfactory were the ample possessions of Solyman before this event, they were now become totally incapable of attracting the smallest portion of his regard. Shut within his chamber, he gave full indulgence to his feelings; the light of the sun was painful to him, and the pale rays of the moon saw no cessation of his anguish. The wealth of the universe was in his esteem as the dry

dry sand of the desert, and all the glories of creation could afford nothing to appease the anguish of his soul. His conduct in respect of Fatima, he considered as the extreme of baseness; his credulity a crime, which the dispensations of Providence had concurred to punish. “I am utterly unworthy (said he) of happiness and Fatima; had my passion for her been of the nature her purity and excellence demanded, or had my breast been endowed with the virtues which alone could deserve her love, I should not have lent a credulous ear to suggestions of her inconstancy—No:—I was incapable of feeling the exalted sentiment her perfections were adapted

to inspire. Has the brute a faculty of discriminating the excellence of an angel?—no more could the grovelling ideas of Solyman comprehend the divine purity of Fatima; yet humanity might have impelled to pity, rather than resentment of the errors of a friendless maiden, whom the benevolent Zadah had adopted as his child, who knew no home but his humble cottage. Oh much injured excellence, the son of thy benefactor has proved to thee more cruel than even the impious Suajah! regardless of thy sufferings he has indulged in ease, and left thee unsought for, to the power of violence—who knows but had he pursued the search, his diligence might

might have discovered the scene of thy captivity, as his zeal should have rescued thee from pollution and slavery?—selfish and more brutal than the beasts, he abandoned thee when he believed thou no longer livedst to him. Oh, Fatima! Solyman has abetted the iniquity of Suajah!—How after this shall I behold the presence of Zadah?—how acquaint him with the fate which has befallen the child of his soul?—shall I say that his unworthy son, attentive only to selfish resentment, declined the search, and left an unhappy orphan to sink beneath her injuries?—Yes, I will tell him all;—I will paint this base heart in its blackest colours, then banish myself

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myself from him and all mankind for ever."

In the deep silence of the night, when the rational world was buried in sleep, and beasts had long sunk on their grassy beds;—when the silver stars kept watch in heaven, and the nocturnal dews descended on the silent earth, Solyman, unable to sustain the weight of his bitter reflections, quitted his splendid mansion, and regardless whither his footsteps strayed, had attained the foot of a distant mountain.—Here he threw himself on the humid earth, and to the desolate rocks poured forth his anguish.—One human ear alone caught the accents

accents of his sorrow, one human breast only felt for his distress.

Hard by was the lonely dwelling of a Santon, whom threescore years of eminent piety and rigid abstinence, had distinguished to all the country around as the model of sanctity and virtue; to him it was usual for the sick to repair for the restoration of health—to him the afflicted applied for an interest in his prayers. The skill he had acquired in herbs and plants enabled him to assuage the violence of pain; his petitions failed not of procuring to the unhappy the relief which mortals could not bestow.

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The holy man was at that hour employed in celestial contemplation, when the voice of sorrow broke on his ear through the silent air of night—the sighs of woe interrupted his abstracted meditations—he quitted his cell, and issued forth, intent on offering the consolations of pity—he beheld the son of Zadah stretched on the earth.

“Child of affliction,” said the Santon, “know that despair belongs not to the offspring of the Universal Parent, whose justice is wronged, whose benevolence is insulted by immoderate indulgence of sorrow—art thou beyond the compass of his providential care, or out
of

of the reach of his benignity?—Let thy footsteps measure the earth—get thee to the farthest pole, where the distant sun-beams scarcely dart a cheering ray—or if thou wilt, explore the ponderous base of the everlasting hills, or caverns, where from the first of time the cheering light has never made its way—yet know, even there thou shalt not be beyond the notice of Alla—even there thou canst not surpass the immensity of his presence.”

Roused by the voice of commiseration, Solyman arose from the earth—“Virtue, I know,” said he, “can never be overlooked by Heaven; but have the guilty an equal claim

claim to that affiance? Thou seest before thee one whom error has made wretched, whom the folly of his own heart has betrayed to misery."

"Unerring rectitude," resumed the Santon, "is not attainable by man—let this administer comfort to thy desponding breast, that infinite perfection requires only, that thine eye be open to thy errors, and that the humility of thy soul allows thee to lament them."

At these words the Santon took him by the hand, and led him to his habitation. It was long since the unhappy Solyman had permitted nourishment

nourishment to approach his lips—he was faint, and the hospitable sage set milk and fruits before him. At the persuasion of the Santon, he partook of the refreshments before him, and felt his languid frame re-animated: after which he related the story of his life, described his youthful passion for Fatima, dwelt long on her perfections, but was severe in the censures he passed on his own credulity and error.

“Thou hast, indeed, my son,” said the sage, “been to blame, yet much might be said in vindication of thy conduct—thou knewest not mankind, and the guileless heart suspects not evil—the bitterness of self-

self-accusation is capable of alleviation, and hope, that sovereign balm of every mental pain, ought to support thy soul."

Solyman, in a voice which expressed that the words of the venerable man had possessed the power of penetrating even the deep gloom within his breast, replied, "Thou biddest me hope; deign then, oh beloved of our Holy Prophet, to lay the basis of that fair structure in thy prayers. Surely, thou canst not ask in vain; let then thy petitions restore to Solyman the possession of Fatima, devoid of which, he abhors existence."

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“I am not wont,” said the Santon, “to appear an arbitrary suitor at the footstool of Providence.—Know, oh, young man, that prayers for temporal good must be restricted within the bounds of humble diffidence—I will not fail to implore for thee all which Heaven sees meet to thy felicity.”

Satisfied with that assurance, Solymán arose to depart—the shadows of night had retired from before the face of the morning, and cheerful light again illumed the dewy earth. As he yet stood at the entrance of the Santon’s humble cell, he beheld, at a little distance, a grassy hillock, bounded with osiers, and
near

near it a plain square stone of the whitest marble, containing the following inscription:

Thou whom Chance shall lead to the Spot
which conceals the Dust of

HASSAN,

Let his Ashes instruct thee, and his Counsels,
even from the Tomb, direct, in the
Knowledge of this important
Truth,

*That Man can never be so unhappy, as when
Heaven bestows him all he asks.*

“Who,” cried Solyman, “was the unfortunate man, that bequeathed to survivors so singular an assurance?”

“One,” returned the Santon, “whose story it may profit thee to know—let us sit down beneath the shade of those cedars, and I will relate it to thee.”

CHAPTER XVI.

HASSAN was a simple shepherd, who led his flocks on the margin of the Indus—ambition was a stranger to his soul—cheerful were his days, for healthful labour beguiled the fleeting minutes; and sweet was his repose, because innocence was the companion of his breast. Samed kept her father's sheep on the banks of the same river—they often met in the course of their rural employ—the

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damself was beautiful, and the young shepherd felt the full power of her charms—he chaunted his passion to the soft notes of his pipe—the trees which grew on the borders of the stream were engraven with her name—he presented her with the earliest roses of the year, and wove chaplets for her hair of the young myrtle buds; but these demonstrations of love were disregarded by Salned; her heart had long been devoted to another. Raschilda, the wealthiest swain in the neighbourhood, was her lover, and she returned his tenderness with equal sincerity. Hassan at length grew disregardless of his folds—his lambs strayed from his pasture—he went
in

in pursuit of the wanderers, but stopped on his way to lament the cruelty of Saled—he essayed to pronounce the name of his fleecy fugitives, but his tongue uttered only Saled.

He had one day retired to a spot where the overhanging rocks on either side formed an awful shade—a torrent dashing from the mountains soothed his melancholy—the melody of his pipe no longer delighted him, but hoarse howlings of the wild beasts of the desert were become grateful to his ear. Reclined on a rugged stone, he felt the bosom of the earth tremble beneath his feet—deep thunder re-

founded through the air, the rock was divided, and a figure more than mortal appeared before him.

“Hassan,” said the Genius, “I know the feelings of thy soul; I have beheld thee roaming in these melancholy retreats, abhorrent of society, a stranger to the joys of life. Saled has not deceived thee; her love was bestowed on Raschilda before it was solicited by thee—return to thy avocations; for why shouldst thou repine at being unable to attain that which thou hast no right to expect.”

“Celestial power,” returned the shepherd, “why dost thou enjoin
my

my return to society, which must to me be ever destitute of pleasure—these rocks shall be my dwelling—the most unlovely scenes of Nature are alone my delight.”

“ Since thou art inflexible to counsel as to joy,” resumed the Genius, “ know, that during the course of three successive years from henceforth, thou shalt possess the privilege of obtaining all thy requests.”

“ Enough,” cried Hassan, “ oh, beneficent power, I thank thee.—Hassan will soon become the happiest of the sons of men.”

Again it thundered—the rock expanded, and the Genius was hidden from his sight. Elate with joy, Hassan returned to his pastures on the banks of Indus. Imagining there was nothing but the superior wealth of Raschilda to restrain him from possessing the love of Saled, his first petition was for riches.

“Let the flocks of Hassan,” said he, “be multiplied; let the treasures of his fields smile with abundant increase.” His prayer was heard—the cattle within his pastures brought forth their young by pairs, and soon his folds became too strait for the numbers of his fleecy charge—kindly moisture nourished the

the tender grain—his harvests, preserved from blasts, filled the barns, which he had enlarged, and in a short time Hassan was become the wealthiest of all the swains on the banks of Indus.

Now was arrived the period when he appeared before the beauteous Samed with the air of self-complacency—his former timidity was no more, but confident of success, he avowed his passion, enumerated the riches he was master of, and triumphed in the idea of supplanting his humbler rival. But Samed valued not wealth—she esteemed the virtues of Raschida more than the treasures of Hassan, whom the in-

solence of prosperity had rendered contemptible to all the neighbourhood—his rapacity was odious to all, and the pride of his demeanor effaced from the bosom of Salned those sentiments of esteem with which she had been accustomed to regard the former humility and modesty of his character.

In a transport of disappointment and premeditated revenge, he withdrew—he wished for power to punish the presumption of the youth, who had dared to dispute with him the prize of Salned's affection.—“ Raise me to power,” cried he, “ ye Genii—make me to become the first magistrate, that I may be
able

able to revenge temerity and ingratitude."

Some time afterwards it chanced, that business led him to a neighbouring city, the Caliph of which was lately dead, and all were in eager expectation to hear the announcing a successor—at that instant it occurred to Hassan, that the glorious opportunity which he had earnestly desired was now within his power; he had recourse to his wealth, and found it no difficult task to bribe those on whom the nomination to that high office depended.

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In fine, Hafsan was advanced to the Caliphate. Supposing it not in the power of female vanity to withstand the allurements of riches, dignified with power, he had again recourse to the dwelling of Samed.—What before he had solicited, he now demanded; yet the virgin was inflexible to the splendor of rank, as before she had been to the influence of wealth. Surprized and chagrined, he set no bounds to his rage; he issued an order to the parents of the damsel to bring her within the space of three days before him.

“I will effectually humble the haughty beauty,” said he to himself:—“I will possess myself of those

those charms, yet not in the character which she has proudly disdained—not the husband, but the uncontrouled master of Sained; I will bend her high spirit to submission; and when my passion shall be sated with possession, I will spurn her from my presence, as then meet to be the bride of that ignoble wretch whom she has deigned to prefer to me.”

At the expiration of the given time, the sorrowful parents, trembling, appeared before him.—“Wretches,” cried the haughty Caliph, “this instant produce me your daughter, or perish by the scymitar of my executioner.”

“Judge

“ Judge of the faithful,” replied the afflicted father, “ we are not insensible of the honour proffered to thy poor slaves ; but our child has withdrawn herself from our abode——with anxious steps we have sought her in every recess of our mountain——every cavern and wild have been explored by our enquiring eyes, but we have found her not, and here present ourselves before my Lord, on whose will our life or death depends.”

The Caliph, whose dreadful emotions appeared in the fiery glances of his eyes, instantly ordered the executioner to advance—the ancient pair, with a groan of silent anguish, submitted

submitted their hoary heads to the fatal stroke ; but Hassan, recollecting the probability of their being privy to Salned's concealment, determined to postpone the execution, and commanded them to be confined in separate dungeons, intending by torture to force them to a discovery ; in the mean time, he had ordered Raschilda to be brought before him.

“ Tell me,” said he, “ thou vile miscreant, in what recess is Salned concealed.”

The virtuous youth, undismayed by the dreadful frown of the enraged Caliph, replied, with a modest,

dest, yet intrepid air—"Fate, by exalting thee, oh, Hassan, to thy present dignity, has given thee a power over the life of Raschilda; and what am I that I should dispute its equity in thy advancement.—Behold me then in the power of thy hand, yet, over the free-born mind thy dominion cannot extend. May the Powers who revere Salned's virtue, ever preserve her from thy unjust attempts."

Incapable of curbing his boiling rage, the Caliph leaped from his seat, and with his own sabre laid the unhappy youth at his feet, covered with purple gore—then hastily quitting the apartment, he proceeded

ceeded to witness the preparation of torture designed for the wretched parents, in order to extort that discovery which the firm soul of Raschilda had disdained to make; but the efforts of ingenious cruelty failed of the wished effect—the venerable pair were unacquainted with the retreat to which the faithful Raschilda had conveyed their beloved Samed—they were therefore remanded to the dungeon, and reserved to suffer a public execution—so intent was the Caliph in revenging the disappointment his eager desires had sustained.

In the mean time, tidings of her parents' impending destruction had

reached the retreat of Saled, who, forgetting her own danger in that which threatened them, resolved to attempt their deliverance, by presenting herself before the tyrant.

• On the appointed day of execution, she reached the city at the moment in which the fatal scymitar was unsheathed, to deprive the hapless pair of life. With a countenance of horror and despair—with garments torn, and dishevelled tresses, she made her way through the crowd—every eye was fixed upon her—even the ministers of death suspended the bloody stroke to gaze on the beautiful unknown; the cries of her distress were heard by the Caliph, as he solaced his gloomy
foul

soul in 'revenge, within a retired part of his palace—in an instant she beheld him approach—" Spare the innocent," cried the distracted maiden, " and let' thy vengeance, oh, unjust and cruel Hafsan, descend on me alone."

Hafsan, who desired nothing more than the possession of Samed, immediately gave orders for the enlargement of the trembling victims, and seizing the lovely damsel in his arms, conveyed her to a retired part of his Haram.

" Have I obtained thee at last," exclaimed he, " thou stubborn fair one?—Now will the insulted Haf-

can be repaid for all those moments of torture he has suffered on thy account—Behold thyself wholly in the power of the man whose love thou hast treated with disdain, and prepare to make the atonement thou owest to his passion and thy own safety, for he who once ignobly solicited thy regard, is now master of thy person and thy life.”

With a smile of ineffable disdain, Salned replied, “Contemptible wretch, whose sordid soul can glory in a mere sensual gratification, unacquainted with, and undeserving of the noble sympathy of the heart, know that Salned values not life; and to provoke thee to end at once
the

the existence thou hast rendered miserable, her tongue shall avow the sentiments of her soul—the image of Hafsán is poison to the sight of Salsed.”

Depending on that power which by sanguinary means he was now possessed of, the Caliph suffered her to express her abhorrence without discovering any resentment, and committing her to the care of a trusty slave, he ordered her to be treated with every respect, but carefully enjoined, that no means might be allowed her by which she might attempt her life. Thus secure of the lovely prize, for which he had sacrificed both humanity and peace,

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he retired to enjoy a repose to which he had long been a stranger.—

For some time, he sought by a series of soft attentions to mollify the indignant bosom of Samed; but finding those methods wholly ineffectual, he resolved to have recourse to violence, and to possess by force those charms which he perceived would never be a voluntary sacrifice; yet even under the influence of that determination, he was compelled to lament the imperfection of felicity thus acquired.

“Are tears and sighs,” said he, “the meet returns for love so ardent as mine—is it thus the passion of Hafsán is repaid, and is such the nature of that bliss for which his soul

soul so long has panted. "Genius," cried he, prostrating himself on the ground, "forget not the glorious privilege you promised to bestow. I will that Salned receive my vows with smiles of soft compliance."

When the accustomed hour of visiting the weeping beauty arrived, he caused himself to be habited more splendidly than before, and entered the apartment with the air of one already secure of the success of his prayers—he was not deceived. Salned met him with a smile which fired his bosom with transport—her person was adorned with an elegance which gave lustre to her beauty. Hassan was flattered

by the circumstance, as expressive of a wish to appear lovely in his eye, and he approached her with the warmest protestations of love and rapture, to which, with a look of modest gratitude, she replied—
“That I have hitherto been insensible to the mighty Hafsan’s regard of his unworthy slave, let it be imputed to the malevolent power of some malicious demon, inimical to the happiness of mortals.”

“What do I hear?” interrupted the enraptured Caliph, “Is then the charming Saled at last become just to her own beauty and my affection—this hour, this blissful hour, my fair, shall crown our mutual wishes,

wishes, and unite us in the silken bands of wedlock."

"No," returned Samed, "let not the love of Hassan accept the sensibility which, so instantaneously excited, may appear a temporary sensation, rather than the feeling due to his merit—let the gratitude of Samed be proved the effect of cool reflection and established sentiment.—Deign then, my Lord, to partake of a banquet provided by thy slave, and e'er to-morrow's Sun kisses the briny main, the illustrious Vicar of the Holy Prophet shall obtain that which his passion merits."

Absorpt in extacy, the transported lover beheld the summit of felicity greeting his ravished view, and he secretly returned his thanks to the propitious Genius, who had so attentively regarded his petitions—he withdrew, the happiest of mankind; and the slaves, obedient to Salned's command, prepared a luxurious banquet. Hafsan, with eager expectation, waited the approaching morrow, and at the appointed hour repaired to the feast prepared by love.—The mistress of his soul appeared in the zenith of tenderness and beauty—to welcome his approach, the charms of music added rapture to that delicious hour, and refreshments of the most exquisite kinds

kinds flowed in golden bowls.—
Salned presented the cup with her
own hand to the Caliph; he was
dissolved in bliss as he raised it to
his lip.

At that moment the vivid light-
ning darted across his sparkling eye
—thunder shook the apartment—
the Genius appeared before him,
and in a tremendous voice pro-
nounced—“ Forbear, rash mortal,
that pernicious cup, which the just
revenge of Salned has impregnated
with thy destruction. Enough has
now transpired to convince thee,
that man is incompetent to deter-
mine on the means conducive to his
real felicity—leave then the choice
to

to him whose wisdom only is equal to the decision, and submit thy soul to that which he ordains.—Humbled by this trial, confess that thy happiness cannot be attained in pursuit of selfish, but of social good. Go then, and seek it in another's welfare, rather than thy own, and thou shalt find, that the farther thy desires turn from the stagnant lake of selfish gratification, the more pure and copious shall the precious stream be diffused over thy own breast—the privilege which thou blindly hast desired, so prejudicial to thy own and others peace, was not effectual to the full extent of thy ungoverned passion. Raschilda was preserved from the fury of thy
guilty

guilty arm—he lives—and the happiness which thou, whilst meanly selfish, wert unable to acquire, may yet result to thee from the influence of an opposite principle. Go, Hafsán, be true to thy convictions, and enjoy the substantial good, of which thou hast hitherto pursued the shadow.”

The Genius ceased speaking, and was seen no more, but his words had penetrated the soul of Hafsán—he sought Raschilda, and united the hand of that faithful lover to that of the virtuous Sahné—the same hour he resigned the Caliphate, and retiring to his former habitation, he instated the happy pair

pair in the possession of all the wealth he had enjoyed on the banks of Indus—he continued a short time a cheerful witness of their bliss, and then set out on travel with design to render the experience he had gained beneficial to the world at large,

In the prosecution of so benevolent a plan, he sought out the wandering and misguided mind, probed all its maladies, and by his counsels seldom failed of restoring it to peace—he composed quarrels—adjusted differences, not only in private families, but often in those States which he visited in his progress.—In my arms (added the
Santon)

Santon) the philanthropist breathed his last—still anxious for the benefit of his beloved species, he caused the inscription thou hast seen to be engraved on his tomb.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVII.

SOLYMAN quitted the holy Santon with intent to renew the pleasure he had enjoyed in his conversation, and by the advantage of his counsels to replenish his mind with fortitude and patience. Some time afterwards, as he was on his way to the peaceful cell, and proceeding with a pensive air along the solitary path which led to it, his attention was engaged by the sound of a voice, the sweetness of which convinced

convinced him it was the same that had some time before excited the most painful emotions within his breast—he stopped, and with earnest eye gazed around on every side, without discovering the traces of a human being—he felt his disconsolation augmented, and, with disappointment depicted on his countenance, proceeded on his way—the winding path brought him to the angle of a thicket, within the verge of which he discovered two persons apparently engaged in contention—one of them, a youth of most graceful figure, was clasping to his bosom a lacerated kid, and embalming its bleeding wounds with tears of pity; the other had much of ferocity

city in his aspect, and seemed uttering some furious menaces against the tender compassion of his companion.

Solyman felt himself interested in the circumstance, and incapable of proceeding till peace should again be restored to the unknown disputants; but before he could reach the spot where they stood, he beheld the hand of the elder lifted up as if to aim a deadly blow at the placid offender—swifter than lightning he flew to the aid of the assaulted, and the other fearing the punishment of his malignity, retired with rapidity to the distant plain, and soon was hidden from
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the view. In an encouraging voice he addressed the trembling youth, who that moment turned his face towards him.

“ Powers of mercy,” cried the son of Zadah, “ what do these blessed eyes behold !”

He had scarcely uttered the exclamation of doubt and surprize, when the youth fell lifeless at his feet—a moment, and that the most blissful of his life, confirmed his doubtful hopes—his arms encircled Fatima—recovering at length by his enraptured caresses, she cast on him those eyes which beamed love and joy, and in the softest accents

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whispered, "Art thou, indeed, my Solyman?—Oh, by what blessed accident art thou here given to my longing sight?"—A flood of tears then gushing from her lovely eyes, relieved the oppressive transport of her soul.

Solyman, after briefly relating that her sudden disappearance was the circumstance which first led him from the vale of Cassimere, added in rapturous accents—"But now, oh thou inestimable gift of bounteous Providence, we meet to part no more—we will fly to the peaceful cottage of Zadah—we will quit a treacherous world for ever, and

and find the whole of life in love and innocence."

Fatima, casting her eyes down on her masculine habit, wept afresh—"No," cried she, "it is not permitted us to be thus happy—Go, Solyman, be blest in the virtuous tranquillity of Zadah's cottage; Fatima cannot follow thee—she is—she is a slave."

A chilly coldness thrilled through the heart of Solyman at the intelligence, and for some moments he remained mute with grief and despair. At length, collecting the powers of reflection, he replied, "The habit thou hast assumed, my

Fatima, gives vigor to my hopes, and persuades me, that under so fortunate a disguise, love has not rivetted the chain of thy slavery—thy freedom may be purchased with gold, and were the treasures of Golconda mine, how gladly would thy faithful Solyman sacrifice them all to thee.”

The retirement of the holy Santon was at hand, and thither the ardent lover conducted the fair object of his hopes—there they consulted on the best measures for effecting Fatima’s enlargement. The Santon willingly undertook to manage the affair, nor did Solyman despair of success, since to the efficacy

cacy of his prayers, he ascribed the blissful prospect which now opened to his view.

A wealthy Lord of Delhi was the proprietor of the fair slave, who, though a stranger to her sex, was induced, by the amiable timidity and sweetness of her disposition, to regard her with peculiar favor. At first he rejected the idea of relinquishing so favorite a domestic, but his bosom was not invulnerable to the power of gold; he accepted a ransom, and Solyman esteemed the half of his treasures well bestowed in the redemption of his beloved Fatima, and the other part he resolved to devote to purposes of charity,

city, for experience had taught him the inefficacy of riches to the acquisition of felicity—he had long been sensible of the errors of a too lively imagination, and the presence of Fatima imparted vigor to every prudent and virtuous resolve.

The benevolent Santon, exulting in the happiness of the amiable lovers, and awfully impressed with adoration of the secret counsels of Providence, expatiated on subjects the most sublime and interesting to mankind—while the words of truth and wisdom dropped from his lips, the grotto was suddenly illumined by a ray of glory—the spicy fragrance of Arabia breathed in the
fanning

fanning gale, and wrapped in a silver cloud, a celestial being descended to the earth.

“ In me,” said the resplendent vision, “ behold one of those messengers whom the beneficence of Alla commissions for the welfare of mortals. Son of Zadah, the vivacity of thine imagination hath betrayed thee, and the mistakes of youth beguiled from the path of peace—thou hast sought good where it existed not, and overlooked that which it was in thy power to enjoy ; the station assigned to each individual is that wherein his happiness is to be found, and content the only wealth from which he can

derive it—convinced by thy mistake, learn that no condition is restricted from the enjoyment of those things, which conduce to the real benefit of human life.

“ Fatima, thou hast misplaced the principle which was implanted in thee as an incentive to that which is truly valuable—the love of praise thou hast directed to an unworthy aim, even to the fleeting excellence of external beauty, which more than that of thy mind was the object of thy care. Absorpt in admiration of that which must shortly become the image of loathsome deformity, thou neglectest that part of thy nature which must for ever retain

retain the effects of thy neglect or culture—but the object of thy ignoble vanity has proved a source of sorrow to thee—in the correction, contemplate thy error, and know that the mind alone can merit the regard of rational beings.

“ Thus are infatuated mortals left awhile to the influence of corrupt passions, that consequent events may correct the primary irregularities of the heart—but happy they who at last open their eyes to conviction—and truly wise, not he who has never been mistaken, but he who employs a consciousness of past errors to rectify the bias of his future life.”

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The ethereal messenger here left speaking, but still his smile expressed benignity and peace—with sounding pinions again he cleft the yielding air, and the blue concave concealed him from mortal view.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XVIII.

AMIDST the endearments of the liveliest rapture and the purest love, Solyman expressed his desire to be informed of the events which had befallen his beloved Fatima, and the occasion of her laying aside the apparel of her sex. With a modest smile she replied, “Blest was the hour which separated me from Zadah’s paternal dwelling, and precious the sorrow which since that time has wrung my heart; from

from hence I derive an exquisite sensibility of present happiness— from hence I have learned to qualify myself, in some measure, for the purity and ardor of thy affection. Thou mayst remember with what coldness I affected to hear thy vows; yet even then thou only wast lord of my tenderest wishes; but the beauty which was the theme of thy admiration was the object of my own idolatry; and I vainly thought the love of one too mean a sacrifice for charms like mine—hence, though my affections were wholly thine, I heard the protestations of every swain with complacency, and flattered the expectations of all, because unwilling to resign the pleasure

sure of hearing myself admired.—
Despise not, oh, Solyman, the folly
of my youth—misfortunes have rec-
tified these mistaken ideas, and in-
genuous acknowledgment is per-
haps the only proof of it.

Esteeming the village in which I
had passed my happy youth, as too
obscure a sphere for the display of
beauty, I resolved to acquire admi-
ration in the distant plains. I had
already strayed beyond the pastures,
and was set down to adjust my dress
in the mirror of a silver fountain—
contemplating that person which
was now to effect new conquests.
I suspected not any witness of my
vanity and weakness, till the instant

I

I found

I found myself encircled in the arms of a villain, in whose breast the charms I had been admiring had excited libidinous desire ; in vain I shrieked and uttered thy name—resistance was ineffectual, and superior strength bore me still farther from security and thee—doubtless I had that moment fallen the victim of unlawful passion, had not a company of travellers then passed by, the principal of whom, hearing the cry of my distress, immediately stopped, and commanding the ravisher to release me, offered his protection—gladly I embraced the offer of apparent kindness—I threw myself at his feet, and told him the occasion of my distress—he heard

me

me with attention, and, as I recollect, surveyed me with earnest scrutiny, then respectfully raising me, he bade me fear nothing, for that he himself would safely conduct me back to the abode I had quitted—words were too poor to express my gratitude—I blessed his benevolence, called him the protector of my honor, and entirely committed myself to his care. Mounted on one of his best camels, I travelled that day in imaginary security; but at last, perceiving no vestige of Zadah's beloved cottage, I expressed surprize, when he artfully persuaded me, that business occasioned him to take a wider circuit, but soon should attain the desired spot. Perceiving,
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at length, my simplicity beguiled, I avowed the resolution of traveling no farther on a road which I now suspected to lie in a contrary direction—it was then the wretch, who called himself Suajah, threw off the mask from the face of villainy.

“Beauteous Fatima,” said he, “those exalted charms were not formed to shine in the obscurity of a village hamlet, or bless the rude arms of an ignoble swain.”

“To what would thy suggestions tend?” (cried I, alarmed) “I am incapable of aspiring to a station superior to that which my humble lot

lot decrees, and rather would I share the love of Solyman than the throne of India."

"Away," resumed the base Suajah, "with these fantastic ideas, suited only to those whom nature has classed among the most ordinary of her works—thy beauty demands the possession of affluence and splendor, and there shall the policy of Suajah secure thee."

Terrified at his speech, I sunk to the earth, and he left me to my own reflections. After I had considered the import of his words, I was convinced that resolution alone could secure me from his base designs.

figs. I dreaded not the hazard of seeking my return to my beloved home, unprotected and alone: He was doubtless aware of my intention, for when I would have escaped from his hands, I found that I was guarded with the strictest vigilance.

“Recollect,” said he sternly, “that you are in my power, and on your own conduct depends the treatment you will receive from my hands—should you discover a refractory disposition, I have means to force you to submission.

“If,” answered I, “you would have me passive, declare explicitly the
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the utmost I have to dread from your designs."

"The time," returned he, "is not yet come for such avowal—be patient, and you will one day look back with gratitude on the measures of Suajah, when in possession of the advantages which dazzle the eyes of all your foolish sex.

"Perfidious traitor," cried I, "is this the kindness you professed to an unhappy damsel?—Wretch as thou art, dost thou not fear a just avenger of thy treachery?"

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“ My distress had no other effect than to excite a smile of contempt on the countenance of the infamous Suajah. From that time I was conveyed in a covered litter; and uncertain of the destiny that awaited me, I could only express my grief by tears and mental prayer. It was now, oh, Solyman, that I lamented the possession of that beauty, which had till then been the object of my delight. “ Why (I cried) was I not formed the homeliest maiden of the plain, destitute of those fatal charms which expose me to the violence of the basest passions—I had then, though incapable of inspiring love, at least been exempt from the misery which now awaits me.”

me."—Thus was I too late convinced, that the most desirable endowments of nature may, in the justice of providential dispensations, become the punishment of those who have wantonly abused them—should a being endowed with rationality place the sovereign good in the fleeting possession of external excellence—yet such was the error of Fatima, and the gifts she prized as most valuable, became the bane of her liberty and happiness. But to abridge the story of my woes, I will briefly inform thee, that the perfidious merchant at length sold me a slave to the Chonah of Tonquin, who, pleased with my person, thought no price too exorbi-

tant for my purchase; and thus the treachery of Suajah was rewarded with a treasure equal, perhaps, to the utmost wish of his fordid soul."

"Call it not a reward," interrupted Solyman, "the wages of iniquity, though they were the riches of the globe, can only be a curse. Suajah might, indeed, have gratified his thirst of gold, but no wealth can purchase peace to the base. Hadst thou, my Fatima, beheld with me the last moments of that wretched man—hadst thou beheld, when the furious spirit was compelled to quit the mansion of the body, to enter on the dreadful unknown, all which thou hast suffered

ferred by his means would have appeared as happiness, as bliss, compared to the anguish of his guilty mind—thou wouldst have acknowledged, that though Alla in mercy delays his vengeance, yet at last it fails not to overtake the impious violator of his righteous laws—those laws which he himself has written on the human heart. But proceed, thou amiable sufferer, with thy relation.”

“The Chonah,” resumed Fatima, “is the most arbitrary of mankind—a stranger to those refinements which harmonize and ennoble the human soul, all his passions are impetuous, which, che-

rished by the possession of absolute power, render him less civilized than the grizzly monsters of the desert. I was immediately habited in the most magnificent manner, and taught to expect the visits of my royal master; but instead of the servile endearments with which on such occasions he was accustomed to be welcomed, he heard only the groans of an agonizing breast, and saw nothing but the tears of unutterable anguish—his countenance assumed a tremendous frown; I fell, pale and trembling, at his feet—“Let not my Royal Lord,” said I, “behold the affliction of his slave with indignation, whose tears now flow at the fond remembrance of
her

her country—at the recollection of friends, whom from infancy she has been accustomed to behold.”

“At these words his aspect became less dreadful; his bosom seemed to admit the impression of pity, and with an air of condescension, he stooped to raise me from the ground.

“Thy incomparable beauty,” said he, “rash maiden, pleads for thy pardon, else had thy temerity cost thee dear—the Chonah of Tonquin is not accustomed to be received with tears, or to hear of considerations preferred to the hope of his favour; but I forgive thy indiscretion, as the effect of insensibility

bility to the nature of thy condition, which amply compensates the satisfactions thou hast left behind—enough is then sacrificed to local prejudice, prepare thee now to receive the honour of a Monarch's love."

He then proceeded to press me to his bosom—I shrieked, and again prostrated myself on the floor—he drew his sabre—I beheld its gleaming terror undismayed—again his eyes lost their dreadful ferocity, and he said, "I will not yet destroy so fair a model of perfection—charming Fatima, recollect before it be too late, that the ardor of a royal lover

lover brooks not capricious trifling."

"Ah, most illustrious Prince," cried I, somewhat encouraged by his lenity, "suspect me not of caprice; thy slave would bless the auspicious hour which procured her the notice of the mighty Chonah, were it not that her affections are devoted to one beloved youth whom —."

"No more," cried he, enraged, "if thou wouldst not provoke instant destruction—how hast thou the audacity to advance that plea before me?—Knowest thou not that the Chonah of Tonquin will endure

endure no rival in his favour—yet still would I spare thee—still exalt thee to honours and delight ; therefore the space of two days I grant thee to reflect on the rashness of thy present conduct.—I will see thee no more till thou hast resolved to meet my love or my revenge.”

The haughty Chonah then withdrew, and soon after I was visited by the Chief of the Eunuchs, whose name was Nizam—he was by birth a Christian, and being taken captive while young, had gradually attained the highest degree of favour with his Royal Master—he was by Nature humane, by principle benevolent—with a look of compassion

sion he approached me—"Beauteous Fatima," said he, "I pity thy distress, which every feature of thy face too plainly evinces—the duties of my station have brought me to thy presence, but the sense I have of thy affliction compels me to offer thee salutary counsel. Thou canst not be ignorant, that whatever may have been the fortunes of thy life, thou art now a slave to one whose will knows not contradiction, and whose disposition is imperious as his power is unlimited—thy interest directs to an implicit submission to his pleasure; in return for which, wealth, splendor, ease, every thing estimable in the eyes of mortals, save liberty, will be thy own."

"These,"

“ These,” cried I, “ oh, Nizam, nay, even liberty itself, I would cheerfully resign, might I be permitted to preserve my yet unspotted faith—I love another; how then can I return the ardor of the Chonah?”

“ Virgin,” resumed he, “ thy fate is indeed severe—yet, since events are so disposed, wisely do thou bend in silent acquiescence.”

“ I bend,” said I, “ in humble resignation to all, even to slavery—but the Chonah’s love, oh, Nizam, there my faithful soul revolts—my life is now the property of our common master, and unreluctantly I
yield

yield to his mandate—but my unpolluted faith shall ever be preserved to Solyman—full of his dear idea only, I will descend to the silent tomb.”

The Chief of the Eunuchs wiped a tear from his cheek, and without reply retired from the apartment. During the sad interval which now elapsed, I was made to receive all the honours of Royalty—the apartments assigned me were beyond description noble—the provisions of my table were served in covers of massy gold, enriched with costly gems, while kneeling slaves burnt before me the most precious odours—yet, wrapt in the bitterest reflections,

tions, I was insensible to the pomp which furrounded me—the homely accommodations of Zadah's humble cottage were more estimable in my idea than the fastidious splendor of a royal court. On the evening which preceded the day appointed for my dreaded interview with the Chonah, the friendly Eunuch again entered my apartment.

“The morrow approaches,” said he, “thou most unhappy fair one; which will finally decide thy fate; trust not to the power of thy charms over the vindictive passions of the Chonah; he will not brook thy coldness; neither is he capable of comprehending the nature of thy distress

distress—prepare thee, therefore, to obey his will, or submit to the stroke of his revengeful sabre—think not I attempt to inspire thee with imaginary terrors—these eyes have seen the imperious tyrant plunging the instrument of death in the bosom of her, who but an hour before was the unrivalled empress of his soul—take then thy measures, for the decisive moment draws near.”

To this address I replied with an unflinching voice, “Nizam, life only can be estimable to the mind of sensibility, when social connections render it valuable—the happy only dread the approach of death—

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misery

misery is courageous, and destruction is more welcome to Fatima than the Chonah's love."

"The Chief of the Eunuchs heard me with a look of ineffable sympathy.—"Born," resumed he, "far from the power of eastern despotism, my infant mind imbibed the principles of that religion which humanizes the heart, and warms it with universal benevolence—hence I have beheld thy sorrows with compassion, and though I hazard even life in the attempt, would, if possible, alleviate thy misfortunes—if thou hast courage, take this phial—its contents will open a way to thy

thy escape—confide in my faith, and leave the rest to me.”

He then, presenting me with a small phial, instantly withdrew.—I stopped not to deliberate on the nature of its contents; despair had chased timidity from my breast—“If,” said I, “the Eunuch be faithful, Heaven has granted me the means of deliverance from my sufferings—if not——”

I pursued the meditation no farther; but immediately swallowed the liquor, and in a few moments found an universal stupor pervading all my powers—all then was oblivion—when the reasoning faculties

were again restored, I found myself within the gloomy confines of a tomb, and dressed in the habiliments of the dead.

“ After a few moments of reflection, I was enabled to comprehend the whole of the Eunuch’s beneficent design—my soul poured her emotions in a grateful ejaculation to Heaven. After which I arose, and perceived a small bundle at my side, which contained a few jewels and a suit of man’s apparel, which, doubtless, the generous Nizam had provided as the disguise best adapted to facilitate my escape from the kingdom of Tonquin, and which from that time I have constantly worn,

as

as a security from the dangers to which as a female I was obnoxious; and though I have not been able to secure my liberty, I, doubtless, am indebted to it for protection from those outrages, which were more dreadful to my imagination than slavery or death."

"But why," said Solyman, "did not my Fatima embrace the opportunity of freedom to return to the paternal arms of Zadah?"

"Thither, indeed," replied she, "my warmest wishes turned; but shall I confess to thee, oh, Solyman, that when I reflected on the suggestions which my absence must
I 3 have

have excited in thy breast, injurious probably to the faith and purity of my soul : I felt a secret dread of thy presence, and, though conscious of my unspotted innocence, I feared a diminution of thy love. “ And what,” said I, “ is liberty or life, if I am deprived of the affection of Solyman ?”

“ Irresolute in my designs, I concealed myself in a cave within a neighbouring forest, and for some time subsisted on the fruits which the trees and bushes yielded, and as I saw nothing to apprehend from beasts or men, I had formed a resolution of concealing my misfortunes in that retreat for ever—but even
that

that gloomy repose was not long permitted me to enjoy—the cave which I had chosen chanced to be the receptacle of a band of thieves, who were accustomed there to secret and divide their spoil. I was at length discovered by these plunderers, and considered as their prize; but as they could not agree whose property I should become, a bloody contest ensued, and I saw three of them perish by the poignards of two others, who at last agreed to sell me as a slave, and to share the price equally between them. Thus was I again deprived of liberty; yet the fate which I then lamented as most severe, was the gracious dispensation of Providence,

to restore me to thee and happiness.

Loaded with chains, I was conducted to Delhi, and there was purchased by the generous Lord, in whose possession I was, when my longing eyes once more beheld my Solyman. But I should be both ungrateful and unjust, did I not here acknowledge, that in this situation I was treated with an endearing affability and kindness by my master, who, far from suspecting my sex, felt a tender compassion for my youth. My soul bowed in pious submission to my fate; yet hope secretly diffused a cheering ray over my bosom, and precluded, even in
my

my saddest moments the admission of despair.

The degree of confidence I had acquired with him whose property I was become, excited envy in the rest of his slaves; they meditated my destruction; and the morning on which thou wert given to my prayers, had doubtless been the last of my life, had not thy arm averted the long concerted mischief. Thus, oh, Solyman, have I related the story of my sorrows. I have candidly acknowledged the errors of a vain and youthful heart—then tell me if I am secure of thy forgiveness, and still blest with thy sincere affection."

Solyman.

Solyman, tenderly embracing her, replied, "We have both, my beloved Fatima, been to blame, and I have much to ask forgiveness of from thee. Instructed by our misfortunes, let us embrace the beneficial end intended us thereby, and from past mistakes learn to watch with jealous eye over the irregularities of the heart—had our lives still glided in an uninterrupted tenure of repose, we had been unworthy of our present happiness, because insensible to its real value. Our joy is now refined, for adversity has taught us properly to relish it—thus the bosom of the earth produces not the luxuriant harvest, except the spreading flood has for a

namylor while

while obscured her native verdure. Grateful to Providence, who has over-ruled our errors to the improvement of our felicity, let us hasten to the arms of Zadah, which will be extended to receive his contrite children, and the benedictions of his lips shall procure blessings on our future days."

The lovers, happy in each other, and at peace within themselves, prepared to set out for the abode of the venerable Zadah. Solyman, no longer esteeming riches necessary to the true enjoyment of life, committed his treasures to the hands of the good Santon, to be applied by him in offices of benevolence and charity.

charity. Health, innocence, and love were the treasures which courted his possession. Qualified to draw a true estimate of mortal good, he deemed them sufficient to felicity, and, with the amiable Fatima, quitted Delhi, and an unsatisfactory public, for ever.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XIX.

ZADAH and Ibrahim were beguiling that part of the day which gives customary cessation to labour, in the cool shade contiguous to the peaceful cottage, when Solyman conducted the fair Fatima to the hamlet of his father,—both prostrated themselves at the good man's feet ; but the sudden conflict of surprize, joy, and doubt, was too powerful for the animal frame to support ;—the venerable sire fainted
on

on the breast of Ibrahim, who had long been the companion of his declining age, and who himself was for some moments unable to ascertain the reality of the scene before him, since Solyman, it was believed, had long since gone down to the shades of death.

Zadah at length felt a re-animation of the vital powers—he opened his eyes, cast them on his long-lost children, clasped his aged hands in a transport of joy and gratitude, and wept those effusions of the labouring mind which words were unable to express.

When

When the emotions natural to so interesting an occurrence had subsided, Solyman and Fatima severally related their adventures, in which the apparent motions of an invisible hand inspired all present with awful adoration. Ibrahim, whom the unlettered counsels of Zadah had recovered from the gloom of scepticism, remained in profound silence, yet his moistened and elevated eye expressed the secret feelings of his soul.

“The powers of the mind,” said Zadah, “have their proper limits as well in the moral conduct of life as in the pursuits of knowledge—in both respects it is possible, by grasping

grasping at too much, to lose the attainments really in our power—solid satisfactions are allowed to man; and your afflictions, my children, have taught you where to seek them. Go then, embrace the good you have earned, and, in the rough trial of adversity, been instructed to value. In health, competence, and social bliss, see and enjoy all which conduce to the true enjoyment of human life.”

The village rang with rural acclamations at the union of Solyman and Fatima; who, taught by humility to discern their own frailties, were induced to contemplate with candour and forbearance the imperfections

sections of humanity in each other—thus rational felicity became their permanent possession, and by not suffering imagination to roam in search of ideal bliss, they effectually secured that substantial portion which ever is within the attainment of virtue. The venerable and pious Zadah saw his joys complete; and when, at an advanced age, the angel of death approached to close his eye-lids, his latest breath expired amidst the plenitude of domestic happiness.

CHAPTER XX.

FATIMA, amidst the chastened rapture of her soul, on the day which saw her united to the amiable Solyman, had drawn from her bosom a ring which she had carefully preserved, and, kissing it with a look of affectionate reverence, exclaimed—"Hadst thou lived to witness the felicity of thy child!"—She could utter no more—her heart beat high with ineffable emotion, and suppressed the tender sentiment.

sentiment.—Ibrahim had noticed the action—the ring had dropped from her fingers—it attracted his eye, and he took it up with an eagerness incomprehensible to all who beheld him. As he drew it nearer his eye, his cheeks lost their freshness, his lips became pale, and a trepidation of his whole frame was apparent.

“From whom,” cried he, with disorder, “was this ring obtained? Speak, beautiful Fatima, and ease my tortured mind, which even now is agitated by indescribable sensations.”

Zadah perceiving an extraordinary import in his manner and enquiry,

quity, took him aside to an adjacent solitude, and there related to him the means by which the young Fatima had been committed to his care.

“The ring,” continued he, “which appears to have affected thee in no ordinary degree, was bequeathed by that unfortunate woman, as the last pledge of her affection to her tender infant, who from that hour has been taught to regard the cottage of Zadah as her paternal habitation.”

“Just Alla,” exclaimed Ibrahim, “behold, prostrate in the dust, a worm of the clod adores thy
inscrutable

inscrutable decrees.—Oh, thou, whose virtues justly entitle thee to the peace thou so eminently enjoyest, most benevolent Zadah, to thee I am indebted for the preservation of my offspring. Yes, even then when I looked with contempt on thy character, wast thou bestowing parental endearment on my child. Fatima is the daughter of Ibrahim.”

Zadah, who was at all times prepared to discern and adore the wondrous dispensations of benign Providence, heard the discovery without betraying any extraordinary emotion, nor was the pleasure he felt on an incident so conducive to

the happiness of Ibrahim a new sensation—the habit of rejoicing in another's felicity was one with his very existence, and for that reason the intervals were few in which some circumstance did not arise to administer to his delight.

Ibrahim, in a voice broken by bitter sobs, exclaimed, “Unfortunate woman!—lovely and tenderly beloved Zenobia, was it for this thou abandonedst the arms of thy indulgent parents to suffer the horrors of poverty and wretchedness in a country far from thy native scene—to vent thy sorrows in the howling waste, and rest thy weary limbs on the cold sod?—Were such the
joys

joys thou formedst in thy mind, when thy affection for Ibrahim prevailed on thee to listen to his counsels ?”

The anguish of his breast here became too violent for expression—he was silent, and the tears of woe fell from his eyes. After some time, he became more calm, and thus resumed—

“ Yet think not, Zadah, though error had taken possession of my reason, that humanity had totally deserted my breast, or that the sufferings of Zenobia originated in ungrateful sensibility on my part. —No, she was dearer to my soul
K 4 than

than the light of Heaven, or the breath of life.

“ When first I beheld the blooming maid, love took possession of my soul ; yet knowing her to be destined to the arms of another, I durst not reveal my passion ; yet to suppress it was, I found, impossible.—Long was my bosom the seat of discordant sentiments. I detested the idea of life, unblest with Zenobia ; and to endeavour the acquiring her love appeared a criminal violation of the laws of honour—a flagrant offence against the law of hospitality—for I had been courteously entertained in the house of her father—I had been regarded by him

him with respect and confidence.—
But what could be expected from
one who had abandoned the re-
straints of religion?

By degrees I began to surmise,
that all events of human life were
either directed by necessity, or left
to chance—by consequence moral
deformity lost much of its turpi-
tude in my idea; and, at length, I
blushed not to seduce the mind of
Zenobia from the obligations of
filial duty and plighted faith. In
an evil hour she consented, and for
my sake abandoned a thousand flat-
tering expectations.—We proceeded
together, in the full enjoyment of
the sincerest love, till arriving on
the

the borders of a certain city, in which I had commercial connections, I thought it expedient to visit my correspondent; but as guilt is ever pusillanimous, I durst not suffer my dear companion to appear in the city; but having secured her a safe asylum without the gates, I left her with a promise of returning within the space of a few hours.—But, alas! from that moment I saw her no more.

A contagious distemper was then raging in the city, and at the instant I was preparing to leave it, having transacted my business, I felt myself suddenly seized with a dreadful chillness—the same instant,

as was the nature of the distemper, my reason also forsook me, and I was insensible to all which passed during a period of three weeks, at the expiration of which my senses were restored, and though extremely faint, I immediately hastened in search of my dear Zenobia, whom I remembered to have left in a convenient spot near the city.

“ Oh, Zadah, thou too well knowest the sufferings of that beloved woman from that fatal separation. Doubtless she judged I had most perfidiously deserted her—the idea of Selim (the name I had assumed in my commercial character)

was

was that which she had been accustomed to cherish with delight—yet now was odious to her soul, and perhaps her latest breath implored a curse on my unhappy head.”

Here his voice again was interrupted by the violence of his sorrow, and Zadah seized that opportunity to remark, that the consciousness of integrity ought to enable him to reflect with calmness on that afflictive event.

“Alla is just,” cried Ibrahim, “who permitted not ingratitude and baseness to reap the reward of virtuous love. The methods by which

which I had obtained the most inestimable treasure of my soul in the possession of Zenobia, were culpable—a dishonest violation of some of the most sacred ties, and therefore could not pass unpunished—Perhaps too Zenobia, though seduced by me from the path of duty, was punished for the pangs her disobedience had inflicted on the hearts of those who gave her birth. Yet was it Ibrahim who first beguiled her from the line of rectitude; why then was he not alone the sufferer?—Yet even here is Alla also just—Zenobia has suffered—but the reflection on her woes recoils on my soul with more than seven-fold anguish—her miseries, indeed,

indeed, were soon relieved by death—but in Ibrahim's life they are—they must become perpetual."

With a view to dissipate a train of reflection, that admitted not the consolation of pity, Zadah withdrew, and soon after returned, leading the amiable Fatima, who, apprized of what had passed, threw herself on the ground, and with tears of reverence and joy embraced the knees of her father.

Ibrahim, as if awakened from some horrid dream, cast his eyes tenderly on his daughter, and springing from his seat, folded her to his bosom—his countenance at the same

same moment lost the traces of impetuous sorrow—joy, tenderness, and gratitude, were seen irradiating his paternal smile.

“ Oh, thou invaluable blessing !” cried he, “ which bounteous Heaven, regardless of my demerits, has preserved to bless my eve of life, come to a father’s arms, and by thy virtues teach him to deserve so rich a blessing. Lately I mourned a son torn from my endearments—yet life to him had been a curse, since already had the poison of my corrupt principles infected his tender mind—the stroke which chastised the guilty father, saved the devoted son.

“ Thou,

“Thou, oh, my daughter, hast happily been nourished in the bosom of virtuous simplicity, not bred in the soft lap of affluence, or taught by a parent’s example to nurse the enemies of thy own felicity—the rudiments of virtue are perfected and confirmed in misfortune’s advantageous school; and thou art at last restored to be the glory of Ibrahim’s age, and to compel his once deluded reason to discern the wonders of Providential love.”

Zadah, secretly delighted to observe the errors of scepticism yielding to the consolatory principles of humility and grateful acquiescence in the Sovereign will, replied,

I am

"I am persuaded, oh Ibrahim, that the man who attentively considers the curious thread which knits the various circumstances of his life, wants not the proof that an all-wise Power over-rules the moral world. Thus much Reason, even from a partial view, is able to discover; and could we scan the whole of time, the glorious truth would yet be more conspicuously discerned—yet even then think not that thou couldst take a compass of the Sovereign intellect, still incomprehensible by finite faculties—accept the light which reason uncorrupt affords, and by that light adore—but where thou canst not comprehend, thy duty is to trust.—

- Study thou thyself, for here thy labour shall not be vain : I know the principle which irradiates the several faculties of an human soul—
is HUMILITY.



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